



Revised November 2, 2011

To: CARES Plus Participant Selected to Undergo a CLASS Observation

SUBJECT: CLASS Observations and Video Recording Protocol

This letter will assist you as you begin to prepare for your CLASS observation and to video record in your classroom or family child care.

Video Recording Protocol

1. Refer to the "Classroom Video Recording" document you received with your camera kit for instructions on how to set up and use the video recording equipment.
2. Remember to post the enclosed "CARES Plus Video Taping Notification" letter on the door of your classroom five (5) working days before the recording is to occur. Please keep this letter posted until the video recording has been completed. The notification letter is available in both English and Spanish, and both copies have been enclosed in this package for your use.
3. Please make additional copies of the "CARES Plus Video Taping Notification" letter in case a parent requests a copy of the letter.
4. If a parent has requested that their child not be part of the video recording, please make the proper arrangements with your center director to accommodate this request. Please handle this request by following your local procedures for parent opt out. Make all of the necessary arrangements prior to the video recording day.
5. Please prepare a written list with the name of each child whose parent has requested that they be removed from the classroom, and give it to the director as soon as possible prior to the recording date.
6. Record for a total of two hours on one day prior to November 21, 2011
7. Complete all video recording during the first two hours of the regularly scheduled day you select during the recording week. It is best to capture the first two hours of classroom activities. If the children leave to play outside, turn off the camera, and then resume recording when the children return to the classroom.
8. Remind your center director/owner/operator the day before you start the video recording and, if needed, re-confirm the arrangements that you and the center director have made to accommodate any child who will not be filmed.
9. If needed, reassure parents by telling them that the focus of the recording is not the children, that the videos will be stored on a secure hard drive, will only be reviewed by CARES Plus employees, and will be destroyed once the review has been completed.

REVISED CLASS Observation Video Recording Protocol

10. Once you have completed the video recording, remove the SD card(s) from the camera and place it in the white padding pouch. Place the pouch in the small yellow envelope that is labeled with your CARES Plus Participant ID number and seal the envelope.
11. Place the sealed yellow envelope in the white mailing envelope that is provided in this package. The envelope is already labeled for return and sending address. Once the SD card has been removed from the camera, place the camera and all accessories in the enclosed package and return within **10 working days**. The return packaging is pre-addressed and pre-paid and you must take the package to the US mail post office nearest you for mailing.

Setting up the Camera

1. Check the camera battery, and if necessary, charge it.
2. Set up the camera, making certain that it focuses on you and some of the children's faces. If you can, position yourself on the left or right portion of the screen, and your students on the other side facing you (silhouette style). If at all possible, avoid having anyone's back in the shot.
3. It is better to use the tripod than it is to have someone (assistant, CDS, etc.) hold the camera during recording. It is helpful, however, if someone can move the camera (on its tripod) when you move and set it up so you can be seen in your new location rather than you having to do that yourself.
4. Make sure that any bright light source is not coming from BEHIND you and the children, as it will block out faces. Overhead lights or side lighting works best.
5. If possible, turn off fans, heaters, or any other noise-producing items during recording. If that is not possible, place the camera IN FRONT of the noise, rather than having the noise come into the front of the camera. If someone is video recording for you, or standing near the camera, please ask them to refrain from talking. If there is other activity in the classroom, please try to position yourself AS FAR AWAY from it as you possibly can. Also, please keep the camera away from bathroom noise, as well as the sink.
6. At the beginning of the video recording, please state **your CARES Plus Participant ID number (found on the SD card label) and state the date and time of the recording**. No other information is needed.
7. If you forget to state this at the beginning of the recording, please provide this information at the end of the recording. **It is imperative to include this information as part of the recording.**
8. Prior to mailing your SD card and camera, review the video to make sure that it is in focus, that the audio quality is good, and that the focal point of the video is you and the children. If not, the recording will have to be redone. If the only thing missing from your video is your CARES Plus Participant ID number, please add that at the end of the recording, as well as the date and time of the recording.

CLASS Observation Frequently Asked Questions

REVISED CLASS Observation Video Recording Protocol

1. What if I can't film during the assigned week (for example, due to field trips, picture day, special celebrations)?

- Please film your classroom as soon as you can, but film on a day that is typical for your classroom. If there are special activities planned during the day of video recording, wait until the next day to film. Return the video recording equipment in the pre-paid, pre-addressed package within ten working days to:

Child Development Training Consortium
CLASS Pilot Project
1620 N Carpenter Rd., Ste. C-16
Modesto, CA 95351

2. What if there's a fire drill during filming?

- If you know a fire drill is scheduled, please schedule taping for a different day. If a fire drill happens unexpectedly, please record again another day.

3. Should I record if there is a substitute, teacher assistant, or other adult leading the activity?

- No. The main focus is on you, so please video record when you are leading the activities. It is acceptable to include other adults in the recording, as long as you are leading the activities for the majority of the time.

4. What do I do if the day I do the recording ends up not being a typical day in my classroom?

- If an unexpected event happens (that lasts 5 minutes or more), such as a fire drill or an unannounced visitor, please record again on another day. If the incident is brief (fewer than 5 minutes), continue recording. If you have a difficult day because the children are misbehaving or you aren't at your best, please go ahead and send us the video recording without re-recording. All classrooms have good and bad days. Remember, the purpose of these videos is to get a snapshot of a typical day, not just your best day.

5. What do I do if several children are absent on the days I planned to film?

- If one or two children are absent, go ahead and film. However, if many children are absent and you think it changes the feel of the classroom, please wait and film when the majority of children are present.

6. What if I don't conduct circle time first thing in the day (e.g., small group comes first, breakfast, etc.)?

- We want to capture a typical day in your classroom, so please start recording as soon as the majority of children have arrived (usually between 8 and 9 AM).

7. What do I do when the class transitions into a new activity, or I need to move around the room?

- Please place and move the camera as needed to capture your interactions with children. Do continue recording during transitions; transitions provide us with valuable information about your classroom, just like circle time and free play activities do.

8. What do I do if the children are distracted by the camera?

REVISED CLASS Observation Video Recording Protocol

Sometimes it helps to give children a chance to get used to the camera. If they seem distracted, setup the camera and leave it in place without filming for a day or two. They should soon forget that the camera is there.

9. What do I do if the children touch or move the camera?

- If the incident is brief and does not impact the overall quality of the recording, you may continue recording. If the incident is prolonged or you think it has interfered with the quality of the recording for the morning, please record again another day.

Troubleshooting

1. What should I tell parents if they ask about the video camera?

- Explain that you are participating in the First 5 California CARES Plus program, a professional development program for early learning teachers in California.
- Assure them that the focus of the recording is on you, and not the children. Inform them that the videos will be confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the CARES Plus program.
- Provide parents with the enclosed one-page flyer that describes the CLASS observation tool.
- Explain that the recording is one of the requirements of the First 5 California CARES Plus Program dedicated to providing professional development opportunities to early learning teachers.

2. What if a parent has indicated that they do not want their child filmed?

- Please speak with the center director to make the proper arrangements in accordance with your local procedures. All parent requests must be addressed.

3. I video recorded in the afternoon instead of the morning, before I read through the instructions carefully. Do I need to re-do the taping?

- Please re-record so that you capture the first two hours of the day for your classroom.

4. I forgot to say my CARES Plus Participant ID number (found on the SD card label), the date, and the time at the start of taping. Do I need to record again?

- No, but please turn the camera on and record this information at the end of the video.

5. What if I have a technical problem with the camera?

- Please contact Michelle Kinner, CLASS Pilot Project Coordinator at CDTC at (209) 548-5733 or kinnerm@yosemite.edu.

6. What do I do if I realize after recording that there was a problem with the recording (for example, it didn't record, the audio quality is poor, I'm not in the footage, or the camera angle doesn't capture children's faces)?

- If any of the above situations occur, please re-record the two hour segment the next day. Please be sure to state your CARES Plus Participant ID number at the beginning of the video, as well as state the date and time of the recording.